

Deaf Culture Question of the Week – Feb. 6 - 10, 2012
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What was the first television program to broadcast captions for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers?

- a) ABC Evening News
- b) Masterpiece Theatre
- c) The French Chef with Julia Childs
- d) The Mod Squad

Answer “c” – In 1972 the French Chef with Julia Childs was the first television program to broadcast open captions for deaf and hard-of-hearing viewers. In the early 1970s a team of engineers from National Bureau of Standards “began to investigate the possibility of using a portion of the network television signal to send precise time information on a nationwide basis.” They weren’t originally considering using this system for captioning. ABC television network cooperated in this research project. The original project failed but ABC suggested that captions could be sent on the line 21 television signal. This led to enthusiastic development of captioning which led to the closed-captioning system universally used today to provide closed-captioning on most television programs.

By the way, all of the programs mentioned in the answer choices figured prominently in the history of captioning. Read about this history of captioning here: <http://www.ncicap.org/caphist.asp>

Deaf Culture Questions of the Week are archived at: <http://www.wsd.wa.gov>